

# Dillon Resource Management Plan

## Update #6 July 2003

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*This is the sixth in a series of update letters you'll be receiving as we move through the planning process and develop an RMP for BLM managed public lands in the Dillon Field Office.*



*If you received this letter, you are on our mailing and/or email list. If there is a problem with your address information, or you would like to be removed, please contact Louise Bruce at (406) 683-8022 or send an email to [MT\\_Dillon\\_RMP@blm.gov](mailto:MT_Dillon_RMP@blm.gov). The BLM Dillon Field Office address is 1005 Selway Drive, Dillon, Montana 59725. If you know of someone who would like to be added to the mailing list, pass this information on and have them contact Louise or the email box.*

*You may also visit our website at [www.mt.blm.gov/dfo/rmp](http://www.mt.blm.gov/dfo/rmp).*

We are sending this short update to keep you informed on where we are with the Dillon RMP. **If you know of someone who would like to be added to the mailing list, pass this information on and have them contact Louise Bruce at (406) 683-8022.**

## Alternative Development

The planning team has spent the past several months clarifying current management direction (Alternative A in the Draft RMP/EIS, the No Action Alternative/Continuation of Current Management). Three other alternatives (B, C and D) are being developed using public comment, planning

guidance, team discussions, and specialist and management review. Differences in the alternatives are driven by the major issues identified early in the planning process, which include management of riparian, upland and forest and woodland vegetation in conjunction with fish and

wildlife habitats, commercial uses, travel management, special designations, and noxious weeds. BLM will begin estimating the effects of these alternatives, complete the analysis, and prepare the formal document for scheduled release in March 2004.

This is how the alternatives are shaping up:

### Alternative A

Alternative A is the continuation of present management, also called "No Action." This alternative would continue present management practices based on existing land use plans and other management decision documents. Valid decisions contained in the Dillon Management Framework Plan would be implemented if not already completed. Direction contained in existing laws, regulation and policy would also continue to be implemented, sometimes superceding provisions of the Dillon MFP. The current levels, methods and mix of multiple use management of public land in the planning area would continue, and resource values would receive attention at present levels. In general, most activities would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and few uses would be limited or excluded as long as land health standards could be met. Travel across BLM lands in the planning area would be guided by decisions in the Montana Statewide Off-Highway Vehicle Plan, approved by BLM in June 2003.

### Alternative B

Alternative B emphasizes a moderate level of protection, use, restoration, and enhancement of resources and services. Constraints to protect resources would be implemented, but would be less restrictive than under Alternative C. Alternative B would accommodate a higher level of production of food, fiber, minerals and services through the use of public land than Alternative C, though to a lesser degree than Alternative D. Resource values and fish and wildlife habitats would be restored and enhanced using a variety of tools, but to a lesser extent than Alternative C. Certain geographic areas containing sensitive resources would receive focused management. Motorized travel across BLM lands would be consistent with proposals from work completed by a subgroup of the Western Montana Resource Advisory Council.

*Continued on page 2*

## Alternative Development (continued)

### Alternative C

Alternative C emphasizes active measures to enhance fish and wildlife habitats. Production of products from vegetation management in all habitats would be secondary to restoring healthy forest, upland and riparian areas. Production of food, fiber, minerals and services would be more constrained than in Alternatives B or D and in some cases and in some areas, uses would be excluded to protect sensitive resources. However, under this alternative, constraints would more often be applied to broad habitats rather than focusing on specific sensitive resources in particular geographic areas. Fewer roads would be designated as available for motorized travel across BLM lands in this alternative than in Alternative A, B or D and some changes would be made in regard to where snowmobiling could occur.

### Alternative D

Alternative D emphasizes active management to produce food, fiber, minerals and services, and includes the highest level of forest and woodland treatments. In this alternative, constraints to protect sensitive resources would tend to be implemented in specified geographic areas rather than across the planning area. This alternative maintains current levels of fish and wildlife habitats but does not seek to increase those habitats. Developed recreation activities would be emphasized in Alternative D. Land health restoration activities would focus on areas that would also provide tangible products. This alternative would have more motorized travel routes designated than in Alternatives B and C, but still less than current management under Alternative A, and would especially provide access into mineralized areas.

## Western Montana RAC

The Western Montana Resource Advisory Council met in Dillon on April 16, 2003 to review the public comments received as a result of the RMP Digest workshops and make recommendations to BLM. Several recommendations resulted from these discussions and will be incorporated into the alternatives for the Dillon Resource Management Plan as appropriate. The recommendations included:

- Use all effective means of controlling noxious weeds in accordance with State law, including browsing, burning, spraying, hand pulling, mechanical, and biological controls such as bugs and pathogens.
- Educate public land users by using current resources and other organizations that work with BLM on weed control, including websites, brochures, news media and washing stations.
- Follow the Montana State Weed Management Plan.
- Allow for commercial and multiple use of public land as long as land health standards are met.
- Consider exchange or direct purchase of lands where special public values exist or where access would be improved.
- Easements must be acquired or reserved exchange transactions so access to public land is improved.
- Incorporate some form of vegetative rest in grazing practices to ensure the long-term productivity and health of vegetation.
- Encourage coordination and partnerships among all land management entities including Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and private landowners.
- Encourage third-party contracts with the academic community or professionally credible sources for the evaluation, monitoring, and research of representative land management systems, emphasizing continuity of the studies.
- Manage sagebrush for mosaic patterns and diversity of

species and age classes. Allow no broad-scale treatment of sagebrush, with a goal of no net loss.

- Consider geologic and hydrologic aspects when assessing proper functioning condition for streams.
- Incorporate beaver management into riparian management when appropriate and in coordination with FWP.
- Manage forests and woodlands for mosaic patterns and diversity of species and age classes that reflect the natural range of variability, and implement educational tools to inform the public of projects that do this.
- Encourage the use of stewardship contracting (the exchange of goods for services).
- Build roads for forest management to minimum standards necessary for product removal and allow no permanent net increase in total road density for these projects. Restore temporary roads to original contour.
- Comply with management direction in the Montana Statewide Sage Grouse Management Plan and the Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation Strategy.

Many of these recommendations are most appropriately applied as BLM implements site-specific projects and monitoring. We have talked about the kinds of decisions made in Resource Management Plans versus project or activity-level planning decisions throughout scoping, in various documents, and at public meetings and presentations. During the development of alternatives, we continue to remind ourselves of the broad framework that a land use plan provides in contrast to the site specific decisions considered in our day-to-day operations. There are major differences between these two types of decisions.

## Western Montana RAC Recommendations (cont.)

### Resource Management Plan Decisions:

- Are the BLM's basic land use document;
- Allocate public lands for particular uses in some cases;
- Identify lands that are open, closed or restricted for certain uses;
- Guide land use decisions and management actions for the life of the plan (15-20 years).
- Establish broad goals and objectives, such as desired future condition of the land; and
- Provide the basis for future project and activity-level analysis and decisions.

### Project-Level Decisions:

- Must be consistent with RMP guidance;
- Generally authorize a specific management activity to take place in a specific area under specific conditions; and
- Require a separate and individual environmental document and public notification and involvement process in order for these specific activities to be authorized.

## Want to Know More?

**On the Web:** You can visit our website at [www.mt.blm.gov/dfo/rmp](http://www.mt.blm.gov/dfo/rmp). We update this site with new information as we develop it, and you can find previous releases of *Updates* and other information.

**Over the Phone:** We have a toll-free number that you can call to hear the latest information on particular topics. Dial 1-877-521-2889 and select your options from the menu.

**In Person:** Call us with your questions. Contact Louise Bruce at (406) 683-8022 or Renee Johnson at (406) 683-8016 and they will answer your questions or put you in touch with someone who can.

**By FAX:** Dial (406)683-2970.

### Acronyms Used in this Update

#### **BLM**

*Bureau of Land Management*

#### **RAC**

*Resource Advisory Council*

#### **RMP**

*Resource Management Plan*

#### **EIS**

*Environmental Impact Statement*

#### **MFP**

*Management Framework Plan*



## Website

*We will be revamping our website soon to make it easier to find archived information as well as to prepare for release of the Dillon Draft Resource Management Plan/EIS anticipated for March 2004. Please be patient! Thank you!*

## How Can You Get Involved?

In preparation for printing the Draft RMP/EIS we will be sending out cards later this fall to determine how many copies we need to print. We anticipate making the document available on CD, as well as distributing hard copies to several area libraries and offices in the vicinity of the Dillon Field Office. The entire document and maps will be posted to our website for electronic viewing. You will need to notify us if you would like to receive a hard copy through the mail, so be alert for this mailing, probably sometime in November.

There will be a 90-day comment period following release of the Draft RMP/EIS in March 2004. We will be holding a variety of public meetings, hopefully early in the comment period during April and early May. We will be publicizing the locations and times of these meetings.



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